1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

621 Each member of this small community knows every other member well, his virtues, his faults, his little foibles and idiosyncrasies, and it is within these groups that one finds the choicest bits of gossip. Every native is identified with a certain hamlet as well as village. Thus, he is a man from Penguli, or Ponembatawa, as well as a member of the village of Lesu. His deepest roots are in the hamlet, and when he dies it is to the cemetery of the hamlet in which he was born that he is brought to be buried. As matrilocal [591 764] residence is the rule, a man is frequently buried in a hamlet other than that in which he was living.[1]

592 The next smallest grouping according to locality is the household, which corresponds, in general, to the individual family, consisting of parents and children. Should a man have two wives, each wife will usually have her own house, although if there is a great difference in their ages, one being very old and decrepit, they frequently occupy the same house. The unmarried men and the boys, after the [513] age of nine or ten, sleep in the men's house. There is no girls' house corresponding to the men's house, and the girls sleep at home until they are married. The usual occupants of each house are thus, the husband and wife, the female unmarried children, and young male children. But even though the older boys may sleep at the men's house, they participate in the life of the household. Just as each hamlet

103 578 [1] In the past, before white contact, the hamlets of Lesu formed two villages. The present six hamlets at the northern end (Simbelmalum, Ponamsambuat, Ponembwam, Ponembatawa, Ponmeniliasau, and Ponatlege) were known as the village of Tagam, and the remaining nine hamlets (Onel, Panat, Logok, Pantes, Penguli, Tarengam, Pencil, Sapone, Penbumbu) were the Lesu village. Each had their own chief, and there was constant fighting caused by thefts of women and pigs between the two villages. While war has been abolished and the two villages are now united, a certain division is still maintained between [304] them. For instance, the boys of Tagam are still circumcised separately from the boys of Lesu. The members of the two places attend each other's rites, but there is no really close intimacy between them.

1. Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

communal cooking. It is a masculine task to bring in the leaves which are used for wrapping the taro and for covering the *liga*, and in this duty the boys render great assistance. At the feast, when the men were making plans for some communal rites, the speaker told the boys to bring in leaves, and that if they did not they would get nothing to eat. While this was greeted by laughter on the part of the boys, they later hastened to bring in the leaves. A boy is seen carrying a load of leaves bigger than he is, or helping his father clean the fish. He may also shred a coconut, a masculine task. He will watch his father and the other men as they prepare a pig to be baked. A boy of eleven helps his father to clear the bush ground for a new garden, but this is not work that takes up much of his time, for new gardens are not made every day.

The boys share with the girls the duties of taking care of their younger sisters and brothers, but even that leaves them more free time than girls. They frequently stroll through the bush, playing in the water, or on the beach, at the same time looking after their little brothers. I never saw a similar group of girls. These boys have access to the men's house and are present at all the masculine rites and feasts, where they receive their share of the food, listen to the speeches, and witness trading transactions. They are quiet on these occasions, obviously enjoying their food and never interrupting or taking any part in the proceedings. Even their seniors, youths and young men, listen respectfully as the old men talk. The fact that the boys of a village are circumcised together when they are about eight or ten years of age, that they then spend several months excluded from all females, that after this they sleep in the men's house, must help to set this pattern of age grouping among them.[1] There is no similar rite for any group of girls.

Within a group of boys, one often finds a pairing off of two boys and the formation of particular friendships. This occurs

[1] The circumcision rites will be described in the following chapter.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

881 778 593 614 give tobacco and pig's fat to the father's sister.[1] The sentiments binding fathers to their boys are given full expression, even though the clan relatives may have a dominant ritual role. The mothers who are of the same clan as their sons have their role too. It is they (and not the wife of the maternal uncle) who weep and fight the men when the boys are taken into the enclosure. It is they also who have been especially zealous with contributions from their gardens and in preparing the food. While the initiation rites are of particular concern to the parents and clan relatives of the boys, the whole community is also interested and anticipates the event months in advance. The presence and participation of all the members of the community adds impressiveness to the occasion, and brings the rites to an effective and dramatic climax.

881 778 The combination of the *malanggan* rites with the initiation rites is of interest. While everyone knows that the former are for the dead, and while the figures on the carvings represent dead ancestors, the points stressed in speeches have nothing to do with the dead persons. Those making the *malanggans* tell how the right to make them has come down through their clan, how they have collected much wealth before they could be made, and how they are now making them because the boys are being initiated. The dead remain in their graves quite undisturbed. The making of *malanggans* at this time adds additional significance to the initiation rites.

882 304 The boy has been initiated and is now a full member of masculine society. He sleeps in the men's house, and while he continues to eat at home and still participates in the family life, a break has been made between him and his

[1] This might also be interpreted in another way, for these women are of the moiety of the boys' future mates, and the presentation of tobacco and pig's fat may symbolize their future relations with women of the opposite moiety.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

mother and all the women of the group. The circumcision itself is not the fundamental or essential part of the rite. In the past it was the adult men who were circumcised, and at this time *malanggans* were also displayed. In the same past the boys of the age who are now being circumcised had their ear lobes cut, a ceremony accompanied by the same period of seclusion, and the same fighting between the women and the men, the same display of *malanggans* when the boys came out of their seclusion, etc. The rites seem to centre around the initiation of the boys to masculine society and not around the actual circumcision, which is but an excuse. Before, the cutting of the ear lobes served as the *raison d'être*.

The girls too had their ear lobes cut, but there was no ceremony or ritual connected with it, but instead was done privately in her own house, usually when it was raining. There was some theory that the operation would not hurt so much if performed while it was raining. The piercing was done with a sharpened stone, and then a coconut leaf, rolled around a small twig, was put in the hole to make the loop drop. There is a folk-tale told to children who were afraid to have it cut, of how a man with uncut ear lobes died and how the others defecated in his ear. Most of the adults have the drooping ear lobe, and all the old people have it. But to-day this operation is very infrequently performed on children, and it will probably soon disappear.

That the ceremony in the past accompanied the operation on the ears for the boys but was lacking for the girls indicates again that the rites are essentially to mark the boy's break from home and female society and his entrance into adult male society.